

A
LETTER

T O A

Prophane Person,

Perfwading him to consider

His Dreadful Sin and Danger,
and to betake himself to a new Life.

D U B L I N :

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*A LETTER to a Prophane
Person; perswading him to
consider his dreadful Sin and
Danger, &c.*

S I R,

THE Prophane Speeches; which you uttered when I was last in your Company, have raised such a *Horror* in my Mind, that I cannot ease it any Way, but by writing my Sentiments plainly to you, as the Case requires; and I pray God give you and me a just Sense of the whole Matter, for the Sake of his dear Son.

Had I had Courage to have stood up boldly, as I was in Duty bound, in the Cause of *Almighty God*, and for the Honour of his *Holy Name*, or at least manifested a deep Sorrow for those Passages which were contrary to the same, I might have escaped that *Guilt* and Regret which my shameful Silence and Disregard have brought upon me: But my silly *Shamefacedness*, with a fancied Point of *Manners*, and the *Conceit* of a more convenient Season, did most unworthily bridle my Lips from reproving your *Prophaneness*, and too much stifle my Resentment of it, contrary to the Dictates of my *Reason* and *Conscience*.

And now I am full of Sorrow when I consider, that I am never like to have such an Opportunity again, in which the same Company may

be, as they might then have been, awakened to their proper Duty in this Case by my Example; or might at least have been Witnesses of my Protestation against your *insufferable Blasphemies*. I consider further; that it is the most shameful thing in the World, that any one should be more bold in the Service of malicious damned Devils, than others for their infinitely loving and merciful God. This is a *Weight* of Shame and Guilt which I cannot bear, and is enough, without infinite Mercy, to sink me into eternal Destruction; and all this is owing to the *Proth* and *Poison* of your ungodly Lips.

And as to the Point of *Manners* which some suppose to be infringed by the Person that reproves a *publick Swearer* as *publickly* as he proclaims his Impiety; there is no Ground at all for this Accusation; For the Breach of Manners is clearly on the *Swearer's* Side, for that he *rudely* affronts the whole Company, by dishonouring, and basely treating their dearest Friend, their greatest Patron, their nearest Relation, and their most gracious and glorious Prince; yea the Author of their *Life* and *Happiness*, that is, their God.

This, this is that which creates my Horror, and sharpens my Grief. I had not the Heart to stand up for the *Greatest* and *Best* of all Beings; I did not duly resent an Affront done to him in whom I *live*, and *move*, and have my *Being*, and who does me Good every Moment: I saw *infinite Majesty* and *Glory* scorned, and shewed no Dislike to the abominable Fact: I heard infinite *Goodness* and *Excellency* treated at a vile Rate, and I seemed, by my base and cowardly Silence, to consent to it. O may that *Great* and *Genepus* *Goodness* which spared you when you blasphemed, forgive my *shameful Omission* to reprove you for so doing, and inspire me with such *Zeal* and *Courage* for the future, that I may never again
omit



omit a proper Season for it: And I pray God to give you his Grace, that you may never indulge your self in such hateful and horrible Speeches which *dishonour* Almighty God, and wound all but senseless Men.

You may perhaps think, that I labour under an *unreasonable Tendernefs* of Conscience, and that neither you nor I are in such Danger as I apprehend on the Account of a few Words spoken in common Discourse; But how can you think so, when the Judge of the World hath said, *By thy Words thou shalt be justified, and by thy Words thou shalt be condemned,* (Matth: 12. 37.) You may assure your self, that in your late Swearing you spake Words that are enough to condemn you for ever, for *God will not hold them guiltless that take his Name in vain*: and alas! I did not resent it so as to shun a *Share* in the Condemnation. For as in the Case of Treason, if we hear treasonable Words and do not speedily discover them to some Magistrate with just Dislike, we contract a part of the Crime; so this Case of Conscience seems to be; And so the Indictment runs, we see, at God's Bar, (Prov. 29. 24,) *He beareth Cursing, and bewrayeth it not*, which seems in the foregoing words to be likened to a Man's concealing of stolen Goods, which makes him a *Partner* with the Thief. He did not discover it to the *Magistrate*, as in that Case, and in that of Treason, the Person ought to do, that would not be condemned as an *Accomplice* in the Crime,

And for this Reason, I am concerned that those *Ten Days* are clapsed in which we are ordered by the Law of our Land to give *Information* to the Magistrate, of this intolerable Offence against God; otherwise I should appeal to him in the Case before us, as hereafter I intend to do on the like Occasion: For I cannot but think it an *inexcusable Fault* for any Christian to neglect those *useful Assistances* which the *Civil Power* offers us,

to remove the Scandals of our Religion, and prevent the Judgments of God: And they are pitiful *Soldiers* indeed, that desert the Interests of the *Captain of their Salvation* in so good a Work, for any Reproaches that unreasonable Men may cast upon them: which if we consider with what awful *Vows* and *Pledges* we List our selves *Soldiers* in the *Militant Church* of Christ at our Baptism, will appear to be a very base, and a very odious *Unfaithfulness*.

As to the *prophane Swearer* himself, he seems to be an open and impudent *Deferter* from the Prince of *Light*, and a loud and earnest Abettor of the Cause of the Prince of *Darkness*. He plainly bids *defiance* to God, and commits a manifest *Outrage*, not only against his *Baptism*, but against all *Religion*, both *Natural* and *Revealed*. A sensible *Heathen* would tremble at his daring *Impiety*, as well as a *Christian* or a *Jew*. There is such a *Violation of Reason* in it, that he that is habituated to it, must be accounted either *Mad* or *Stupid*: Either he has no Understanding, or he does not use it. He does not know, or does not consider the terrible Consequence of provoking an *Almighty Being*, to take Vengeance upon him.

Let me therefore entreat you to consider the Infinite *Majesty*, *Glory*, and *Excellency* of God, which are visible in all his Works: Look up to the glorious *Fabrick* of the *Heavens*; Consider the *Beauty*, *Order*, and *Number* of all those marvellous *Luminaries* above: Tho' they are immensely Great, and innumerable many, yet what *exact Distances* do they keep, and how punctually do they observe the *critical Moment* of their Rising and Going down. Can this be without the direction of Infinite *Wisdom*, the support of Infinite *Power*, and the disposition of Infinite Goodness? Can any Reasonable Creature question the *Being* or the *Excellency* of the Lord of this
Host,

Hoft, when they see it Mustered, Marshalled, and Marched by such exact *Rules* and *Orders*? the *Psalmist* truly observes, that *the Heavens declare the Glory of God*: How Great and Marvellous must the Creator of these Things needs be! Who can conceive the least Degree of his glorious Majesty; or tell us how happy his *adopted Children* are, or how wretched his *Enemies*? How great and heinous must every Offence against such Infinite Majesty appear to be, and what fore Punishment does it deserve?

Look round also on the Face of the *Earth*, where you behold innumerable Sorts of living Creatures, each of them wonderfully made, and no less wonderfully provided for, and disposed of, by the stated Orders of the good Creator; and every one of them peculiarly constituted, shaped, and inclined, according to its *Use* and *Post* in the Universe. If we curiously trace the rising Degrees of *Life* and *Excellency* thorow the numerous Kinds of living Creatures, which fill up the wide Distance betwixt a poor little *Muscle*, which only discovers its Life by a small Motion, and a glorious *Cherub*, whose Excellency we cannot conceive: And if we observe all along, how near the highest Creature of one Kind comes to the lowest of the Kind above it, yet the various *Species* or *Kinds* of Creatures are all along preserved *distinct* and *entire*, and lead us by Degrees nearer and nearer towards the Glorious Creator of all: I say, if we consider these Things with the Reason that God has given us, we cannot but break forth in the highest Admiration of the glorious Creator, and say with the *Psalmist* on the like occasion; O Lord, how Marvellous are thy Works, in Wisdom hast thou made them all: in a depth of Wisdom indeed, past our fathoming or finding out.

Our Admiration will farther increase upon us, if we consider that little World of Creatures which

which cannot be seen by us without the assistances of those curious *Glasses*, which the late ingenious Inquirers into the Works of God have found out: For it will puzzle the most accurate *Naturalist* to describe to us the wonderful *Workmanship* of God, in the *position, connection, and correspondence* of the various parts of a Creature not so big as the *Thousandth* part of a grain of Sand; of which there are Swarms almost over the Face of the Earth, and even in the Bodies of living Creatures.

If we farther consider the *Wise and orderly*, tho' sometimes *Mysterious* Steps of Divine *Providence*, as they lye before us in all Histories, and even in our own common Observation, we cannot but see the great Wisdom and Goodness of God. Yea, if we look no farther back than the two Months last past, in which it has pleased God, by a most glorious Interposition of his *Providence* (manifested in such a chain of surprising *Successes* in the most important *Concerns*, in so many remarkable *Instances*, and in such critical *Season*) to appear for the Relief of his *Church*, and for the common Liberty of *Europe*, against the cruel *BIGOTRY* and *AMBITION* of *France*; we cannot, I say, duly consider this, without a devout acknowledgment that there is a *Righteous God that judgeth in the Earth*.

But to direct you to a more plain declaration of the *Sovereignty* and *Perfections* of Almighty God; look, I beseech you, into the *Holy Scriptures*, which are his *Oracles*, and observe there what terrible *Plagues* and *Destructions*, the Sins of Men have brought upon them in all Ages of the World; in which some notorious Sinners have been destroyed by a *Deluge* of Waters, others by a shower of *Fire from Heaven*; others some by the gaping *Earth*, and others by stormy *Winds*; which shews us that the Creator of all things can make the very *Elements*, which are naturally

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the necessary means of our Subsistence, the means of our speedy Destruction. Yea, He can arm the whole Creation against us, and make all Creatures, from the lofty Stars in the Firmament to the creeping things on the Earth, to fight against us till we are destroyed. The Sword, Famine, Pestilence, and Thunderbolts, are but a part of God's dreadful Artillery; and what is worst of all, God is able to destroy Men both in Soul and Body in Hell; the very thing which too many abandoned Wretches commonly call for, and challenge at his Righteous Hands. O prodigious Folly! Horrible Impiety! tending most certainly to as prodigious and horrible an End.

Ah! how dreadful is the Wrath of this Almighty Lord God? Who can stand before him, when once he is angry? Can any Madness equal that of the prophane Swearer? How can any one pretend to Reason or Discretion, that offends such a Being, and incurs his Eternal Wrath for a few ill Words, which afford no manner of Pleasure or Advantage? You may think that God is patient, and so he is, or you had before now been in the Pit of remediless Torments: But be you assured that he is as Just as he is Merciful, and he hath punctually recorded every Oath, Imprecation and ill Word that you have spoken in your whole Life; (a long and dismal Catalogue without doubt,) and infinite Justice will require Satisfaction for every one of them. So that except you truly Repent, which is no easie matter, it would have been better for you, that God should have smitten you dead on the spot, upon the first act of Prophaneness that you committed; for then the Measure of your Sin had been less, and your Torment might have been less in Degree, tho' eternal likewise in Duration. Whereas now, by your going on to multiply your Transgressions, you have as it were thrown so many Faggots more into the Eternal Flame to make them the more terribly Tormenting. These

These things are so certain, and of such infinite Consequence; that I cannot but beseech you with the utmost earnestness to consider your ways, and to set your self seriously to pray to God for his *Grace* and *Mercy* in our Lord *Jesus Christ*, before you be for ever debarred of that inestimable Privilege; which when you Die, and alas! how soon may that be, will be your Case.

Retire therefore, I pray you, as soon as you can, to your Chamber or Closet, and fall devoutly on your Knees before God, and bewail your sins, and beg the Assistance of his *Holy Spirit* to *inlighten* your Mind, and *renew* your Heart, and to *amend* your Life thro' the means which he hath appointed in the Gospel of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, the *Saviour* of sinful Men: And fix on your Mind always the *absolute Necessity* of changing your unholy Life, because a *Holy God* cannot countenance or embrace a *prophane Profligate*, whilst he continues so. Wherefore set your self to a new manner of Life, thro' the Grace of God, and do it without delay, or it may never be done, and then you will certainly perish for ever.

You cannot deny, but you would do more than this to get a great *Temporal Estate*; and that you would submit to a very difficult course of *Physick* to be cured of any dangerous Disease of your Body: And why will you not be as just to your precious *Soul*, and to your *Eternal Estate*? Be assured, there is a very *Glorious State* above, where holy People will be *perfectly* and *eternally* happy: And we may be much surer of attaining it, if we give all prudent Diligence to secure it, than we can be of getting or enjoying *Worldly-Wealth*; because the Promises of Grace and Glory are more absolute and positive to such as duly seek them, than those which relate to *Temporal Things*. And therefore how vain are they who spend themselves and their time in pursuing

soing *Bubbles*, when with the same labour they might possess inestimable and everlasting *Riches*.

Wherefore I farther intreat you to consider your truest and greatest *Interests*, and come to wise and sober *Resolutions* of resigning and conforming your self wholly to the Will of God, who grants to all his faithful *Servants* a *Title* to his *Eternal Kingdom of Glory* under his *Hand* and *Seal*, in his *Word* and *Sacraments*. And I beg you to come to this necessary *Determination* instantly and unalterably, as the *Importance* of the *Case* requires, and the infinite *Weight* of the *Motives* to it tends to fix you.

Consider I pray you, Do you believe that an infinitely *Great*, *Wise*, and *Righteous God* governs all things, and will bring all *Men* to *Judgment*? And will you, can you offend Him any more by your *prophane Lips*, or any other way of *Offence* against Him? Dare you challenge his *Everlasting Vengeance* any more? Can you suffer your *Soul* to lye on the brink of *Eternal Ruine* any longer without concern? Can you dispise such a *brave* and *honourable*, such a *sweet* and *comfortable*, such a *reasonable* and *advantageous* *Way of Life*, as the *God* that made you directs you to, which his *Son's Blood* was shed to restore you to a capacity of, and in which the *Holy Spirit* graciously waits to conduct and confirm you, with a *Joy* inexpressible in the way, and a *Glory* inconceivable in the end?

Can you now deliberately quit this *Hope*, and give your self up to the *Delusions* of *Evil Spirits* already damned, who seek to make you as miserable as themselves; and will rejoice to see you bound with *Chains of Everlasting Darkness*, as they are? Will you not be prevailed upon, to take care of your own *Life* and *Happiness*, which the very *Beasts* cannot be forced to relinquish; and to cease to make provision for your own *Everlasting Torment*? As yet you may prevent it,
but

but I cannot say that the same possibility will remain with you to Morrow; because no body can tell *what a Day may bring forth*; for Death will render all the means of Salvation ineffectual; and will fully instruct the *Unbelieving Sinner* in the Doctrine of God's *righteous Retributions* in the other World, which he would not duly learn in this. And then what will all your *vain Pleasure in Iniquity* profit you?

What are you now the better for all your past Sins? Is not the *poor little* pleasure of it gone, and has it not left a *Load* of Guilt upon your Conscience, with a *fearful expectation* of Judgment? And if you live longer in Sin, thus it will be at last, when nothing of all your sinful Indulgencies will be left, but the *Shame* and *Regret*, the *Guilt* and *Punishment* of them, which will remain with such as die in their Sins, to all *Eternity*.

On the contrary; what can you lose by Religion, which will give you *Peace* in your Mind, *Honour* among all Men, and *Comfort* in all Events on Earth; and will not fail to bring you to *Everlasting Rest, Bliss, and Glory* hereafter. And all you will lose by it, in the usual state of things, will be; that you cast away the *Filth, Shame, and Torment* of inordinate Desires, ill Speeches, and base Doings; instead of which you will enjoy a state of *Sanctification* and *Honour*. And then God will vouchsafe to *converse* with you in his *Ordinances*, and bless you in your *Enterprizes* and *Enjoyments*. And whether you sit in your *House*, or travel in the *Way*, or Sleep in your *Bed*, you will have the satisfaction of God's *Presence* with you, and of the *Guardianship* of his holy Angels about you; that *all things shall work together for your final Good*, and that if you were now to die, you would go to *everlasting Happiness*.

What a Blessed state of Life is this! how truly *Honourable, Sweet, and Happy*! What a wonder

is it that all Men do not follow the Lord of Life, their only Saviour and Redeemer? and that all places, where his *blessed Gospel* is preached, are not crouded with affectionate *Heavens* and *Doers* of his Will? In short, it is a wonder that all *the World* does not run after Him. None ever shewed such *Love* to Mankind; none ever offered such *Rewards* to the mean, if sincere Services of Men. He bears the *Chastisements* of the Sins of his People, He washes away their *Filth* in his own Blood, He heals their *Wounds*, bears their *Burthens*, redresses their *Grievances*, pities their *Infirmities*, wipes away their *Tears*, succours them in *Danger*, leads them by the *Hand*, carries them in his *Bosom*, pardons their *Sins*, pleads their *Cause*, justifies them *freely*, and saves them *Eternally*. O! who can express the *Blessedness* of such a People, or the least part of the *Happiness* of the Person that is in such a Case.

This is no fanciful Guilding of the pious *Christian's* Condition, but what they feel in the just Exercise of their *Faith*, *Hope* and *Love*. We can bring you to many, praised be God, who can by a blessed Experience testify the Truth of these *great Enjoyments* of Religion here, which we have before hinted; and can with a joyful Attestation say, *Great Peace have they that love thy Law, and nothing shall offend them. Blessed is the Man that walketh-not in the Counsel of the ungodly. Godliness is profitable to all things, and hath the Promises of the Life that now is, and that which is to come.*

But as for you, whilst you go on in your ungodly Life, You are not only a Stranger to these Divine Joys, but are in Danger of everlasting *Misery*. Forasmuch as you daily profane the *Holy Name* of God, You demonstrate that neither the *Love*, nor the *Fear* of God is in you: And therefore as to your present Case, you are lost and undone; and if you die thus
you

will be as surely *damned* as the blaspheming Devils are; as will also all ungodly Men.

But you have a *Saviour* offered you, the *Blessed Jesus*, who tho' he has left the fall'n Angels in Chains that are never to be filed off, yet he offers to become a *Gracious* and *Loving* Saviour unto Men: For he took not on him the Nature of Angels, but the Seed of Abraham; and he now offers You your Pardon and Eternal Life, if you will from henceforth commit your self to his Conduct in the Ways of his Holy Gospel, in the Exercise of a *renewing* Repentance, and Faith *unfeigned*.

Be very speedy therefore and very hearty in your Acceptance of these Terms of Life and Salvation, and suffer not these inestimable Talents to lye buried by inexcusable *Negligence* and *Unbelief*. Reverence from henceforth the Great and awful Name of Almighty God; Sanctifie, with a just regard, his Holy reserved Day; be serious and constant in attending on his Holy Word and Sacraments; accustom your self to good Thoughts and *favoury Discourses*; be deeply humble and meek, meditate often on the *Commands, Promises and Threats* of a Righteous and unchangeable God; delight in the *Company* of pious People, who will greatly further and comfort you in a holy Life; *Pray often* with Fervency of Spirit and Brokenness of Heart; Look unto *Jesus*, your exalted Prophet, Priest, and King; Live in Purity, Contentment and Charity; Abound in the Love of God; and ever think of this Life as a short Passage to an Eternal Estate, and desire Heaven as your final Rest, thro' the Merit of the Lord *Jesus Christ*, and the Sanctification of the *Holy Ghost*.

Our God is infinitely gracious; He will accept the *meanest* Sincerity, and will cherish, not quench, the first Kindlings of Repentance, and the first Inclinations of Love towards him: but he

he will reject and abhor all *Hypocrisie*, tho' never so splendid in outward Appearance.

Wherefore give God your *Heart*; be upright in all you do: Your time of *Labour* cannot be long, but your time of *Rest* and Reward will be everlasting.

That it may please God thus to direct you by his Grace, and thus to accept you thro' his Mercy in our Lord Jesus Christ: Is the unfeigned Desire of my Soul, and the only Aim of this Letter from

Your affectionate Friend.

FINIS.

As with a sword I have slain
the wicked in outward
show. I have given God
my heart: Your heart, O Lord,
is as a furnace of fire,
and you have tried me
as silver. I have kept
my tongue from lying,
and I have not hated
any soul. My heart is
not set on covetousness,
nor have I coveted
any man's house. My
heart is not lifted up
above the people,
nor have I exalted
myself above the
assembly of God.

Your servant David

FINIS

